

ARMY GROUND RISK-MANAGEMENT PUBLICATION

# COUNTERMEASURE

VOL 21 NO 7

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JULY 2000

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## Spotlighting The NCO

**Protect The Force Through Risk Management!**

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# ARMY GROUND RISK-MANAGEMENT PUBLICATION COUNTERMEASURE

JULY 2000

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## The Official Safety Magazine for Army Ground Risk-Management



### A Jumpmaster's Perspective

Overloaded jumpers continue to tumble out of aircraft and experience weak exits. Find out what this Master Parachutist has to say.

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### Survival of the Fittest

Physical fitness is one of the pillars of a strong military force. However, getting fit and staying fit is not without cost.

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**Mission: Confidence**  
**Obstacle Course**

**Hazard**  
■ Improperly constructed obstacle

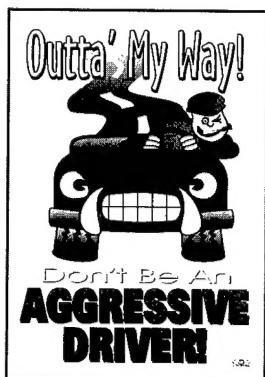
**Controls**  
■ Safety nets and mats  
■ Instructor on a platform on top of tower  
■ Use proper rope size (1.5 inch diameter)  
■ Properly tie ropes to top of tower

**Result**  
■ 1 fatality

### Investigators' Forum

Unit leaders failed to correct known deficiencies and properly manage the risks associated with training soldiers on an obstacle course.

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### Aggressive Driving!

Information to help calm the beast inside you and avoid becoming involved with aggressive drivers.

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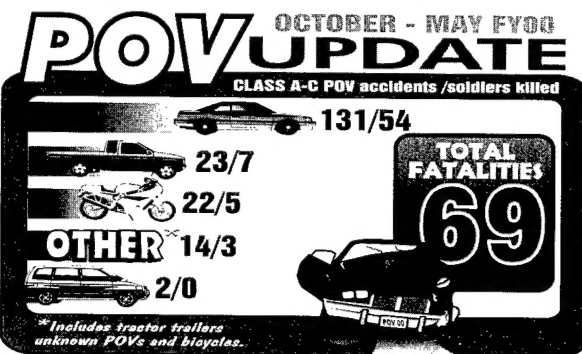
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*Gene M. LaCoste*

Gene M. LaCoste  
Brigadier General, U.S. Army  
Commanding Officer

# It's an NCO's Job!

**Y**OU! That's right. You, me, us! We are the NCO Corps. Soldiers work for us. Soldiers listen to us. Why? Because we've been where they are.

Too many of our soldiers are killed and injured each year in preventable accidents. What can we do about it? As the primary leaders of our soldiers, each of us must take a personal and active role in accident prevention. We must set the standards and ensure our soldiers follow those standards. We must ensure risk management is being used in every cab and every turret. With our help, the Army can save lives, prevent injuries, and reduce equipment losses; plus improve training.

Sometimes people forget just how influential the NCO Corps is. If we take on a mission, you can bet it will get done right, and safe! The only way for the Army to stop its upward trend in on- and off-duty accidents is for the NCO Corps to get smart on the policies and procedures within their organizations. We can do this by enforcing standards at the worksite and by letting our soldiers know we are concerned about their safety. But none of us will save a soldier's life or prevent a soldier's injury unless YOU,

the drill sergeant, squad leader, section sergeant, or platoon sergeant set the example and demand that safety be part of the everyday life of our soldiers.

When you have your daily squad or platoon meeting, let your soldiers know the hazards associated with the tasks they will be doing that day and what safety precautions they need to take. Inspect your soldiers before they start a task to ensure they're wearing all required equipment needed for that job. Make sure you personally know that a soldier knows how to safely operate equipment or motor vehicle before tasking the soldier to use it. Above all, ensure your soldiers are fully trained to perform the job you are tasking them to do, and supervise them.

While walking around the unit in garrison or at field sites, take the time to make on-the-spot corrections. Tell soldiers why you are correcting them. If they know why you are correcting them and that you care about them, then they will care enough to remember.

Remember, soldier safety depends on you. The Army Safety Program depends on you. It's your job, and that young soldier will do whatever you emphasize. ♦

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# A Jumpmaster's Perspective

"I wanna be an airborne ranger; I wanna live a life of danger..."

**A**irborne operations are inherently dangerous. From the early days of flight, man has relied extensively on a small deceleration device known as the parachute. It was originally designed to save a pilot as he jumped from his disabled aircraft, but through modern aviation technology, the parachute has become the premiere means of rapid tactical infiltration.

Where does it all begin? Airborne training begins at Fort Benning, Georgia, by a select cadre of highly professional NCOs known as the "Black Hats." These NCOs turn the non-airborne qualified soldier into a paratrooper in less than 3 weeks. This, by no means, is an easy task. They teach everything from the wear and fit of equipment to the actual jumping out of a perfectly good aircraft.

During training, supervision is paramount. If an airborne student performs a certain task wrong and is not corrected and retrained on the spot, he will assume he is doing things correctly...and

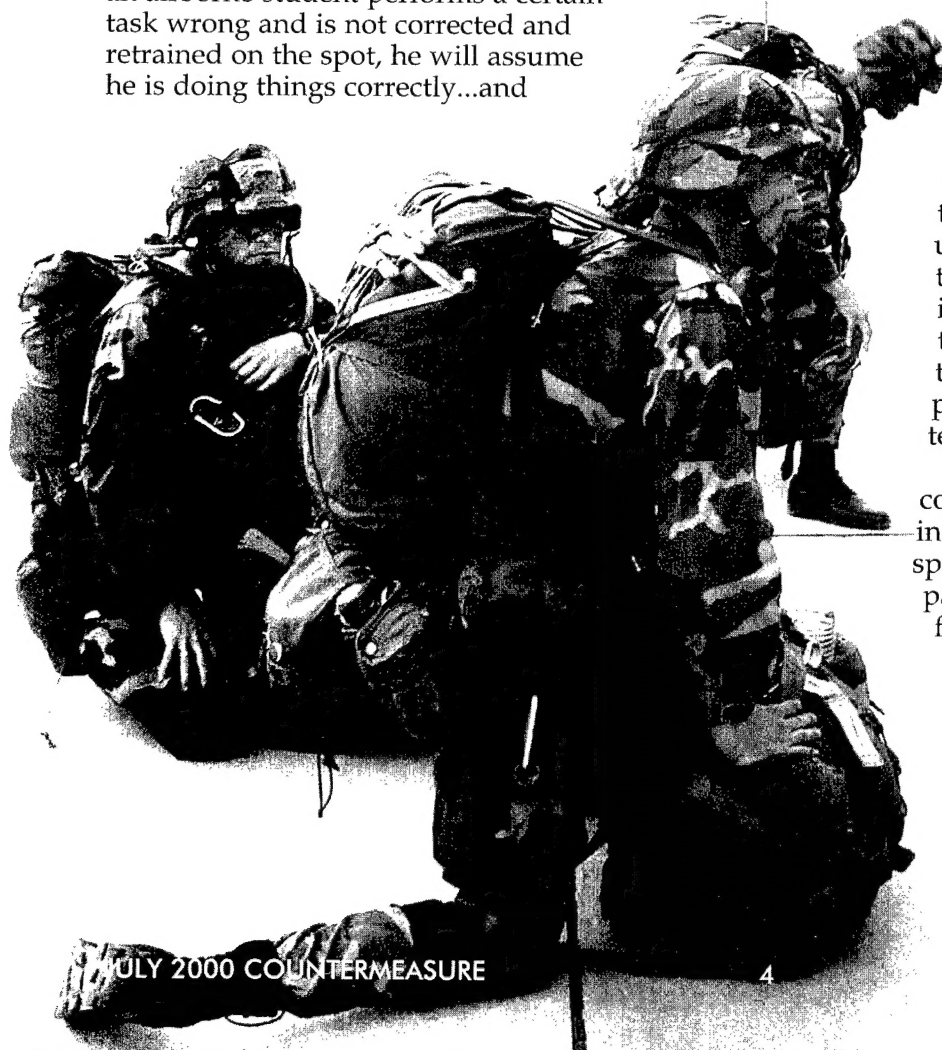
sooner or later, it will come back to "bite" him.

As we all know, the more we perform a certain task, the more comfortable we become doing it. I don't know how many times I have been on airborne operations and have seen young paratroopers with all-purpose lightweight individual carry equipment (ALICE) packs so heavy that it took two troopers to carry it. Who inspected these troopers' ALICE packs?!?

In accordance with FM 57-220, *Basic Parachuting Techniques and Training*, Table 12-2, the maximum load-bearing capacity of a T-10/MC-1 parachute is 360 pounds to achieve a 22-foot per second or less descent rate. If we add a lot of extra weight to the ALICE pack and load-bearing equipment (LBE), we're tipping the scale well over 360 pounds.

Time and again, a jumper has come to the aircraft door ready to jump and the ALICE pack is dragging on the floor or is so heavy that he tumbles or falls out the door. ALICE packs are heavy enough without adding things we don't really need. It is up to first-line supervisors and the chain of command to ensure that these young troopers do not carry unnecessary items. We can control this by using packing lists and inspections at the unit area prior to the airborne timeline starting. It is too late to repack a bulky ALICE pack or LBE when the jumpmaster team starts to inspect equipment.

Further, overloading the soldier can contribute to a weak exit which induces tumbling, rolling, and spinning immediately outside the paratroop door. The potential exists for increased static line friction with the trail edge of the paratroop door, thereby increasing the chance of becoming entangled with equipment. However, by enforcing soldier load limits and sustained airborne training in the mock-up aircraft, we can reduce the risks that are already inherent to airborne operations.





(See Safety Alert Notification 280200OCT99 on our web site <http://safety.army.mil>.)

We, as leaders, can change this. During sustained airborne operations, every paratrooper needs to take training seriously. We have heard the sayings *"Train as you fight"* or *"What you do here, you'll do in war."* It is paramount that not only the jumpmaster team takes charge, but also all leaders involved with this training. It is a leadership responsibility to ensure their soldiers are trained to standard. Of course, once a paratrooper leaves the aircraft, he is on his own and will rely on his equipment and training to get to the ground safely.

Let's look back at the trooper's training. Was it thorough? Was it performance oriented? Was it to standard? Properly trained soldiers have a decisive edge under even the most hazardous conditions. Failure to plan properly, however, takes away that edge.

There isn't a lot of time once he exits the aircraft until he hits the ground. All actions have to be instinctive. The five points of performance should be muscle memory actions. The time he takes to think about it may be the rest of his life. The sky, even more than the sea, is unforgiving to the slightest error.

Think about the parachute landing fall (PLF) platform during sustained airborne training. Did we rush through it? Were there too many people on the platform? Did we send the trooper back through the line if he didn't do the correct PLF?

We need to stress this training as much as activating a reserve parachute for a malfunction. More so than not, a jumper gets injured upon contact with the ground. A properly executed PLF

can reduce or eliminate injuries associated with landing; that means all five points of contact—balls of feet, calf, thigh, buttocks, and push-up muscles. We can't control the inevitable hole in the ground or rock that throws us off balance; however, we can change the needless injuries from landing.

If on the drop zone, we see a standing landing or an improperly executed PLF, we must make an on-the-spot correction. A PLF must be a natural act, not something that is forced. Chances are that if you correctly do a PLF, you won't get hurt.

Naturally, airborne operations don't end with PLF. We must do other things such as turn in equipment. Do we look for equipment falling or jumpers landing on subsequent passes while we are assembling on the drop zone? The drop zone is an area that must have our total attention. Front, back, up and down must be stressed. Think back... Do you remember seeing an ALICE pack that was jettisoned from altitude? Just imagine what that would do to a person on the ground. Ouch!

Clearly, airborne operations are dangerous and mistakes can happen anytime human factors are involved. However, it's incumbent upon each leader and every soldier to pass along those hard-learned lessons, so we don't memorialize those lessons with "Taps," tears, and folded flags. ♦

**Keep your feet and knees together...Airborne, All the Way!**

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## Jumper Weight

**J**umpers are still being overloaded during jumps. FM 57-220 provides guidelines for combat jumps and recommended weights. Overloaded jumpers continue to tumble out of aircraft and experience weak exits. Commanders should plan resupply missions and the use of bundles to eliminate excess weight on jumpers. Plan for the immediate mission and then bring in the equipment needed for sustained operations. You will save lives and injuries, and provide a faster reacting force. ♦

# Survival of the Fittest

**This is the first in a series of articles on physical training and their accident causes. This issue is dedicated to jogging and running. Future issues will cover weight lifting, road marches, obstacle courses, sports injuries, warning signs of heart attack, and exercising in cold environments.**

**T**he letters "PT" don't look like much, but they can spell pain and torment to the unwary as well as the unfit and out-of-shape. Physical fitness is one of the pillars of a strong military force. One of the most important aspects of being a soldier is being in top physical condition. The Army emphasizes physical training (PT) and requires soldiers to pass an Army Physical Fitness Test every 6 months. In some cases, the score on the test is good toward promotion points. However, getting fit and staying fit is not without cost.

Statistics show that more than 295 soldiers were injured in the last 3 years in some sort of physical training, of which running/jogging, road marches, and obstacle course activities were the major causes of injury. Not only did the Army lose productive work time, these injuries cost nearly \$4.2 million.

Every soldier knows that the 2-mile run is a part of the PT test, and formation runs are part of training. However, this activity that keeps soldiers in shape for combat has fast become a prime injury producer. The most common accidents result from missteps and slips, being hit by a vehicle, heat injury, poor physical condition, and wearing the wrong shoes. However, there are things leaders and individual runners can do to lessen the chance of an accident and the severity of injuries.

## **Stopping the missteps, slips, trips, and falls**

Inattention and running on poor surfaces injure more soldiers than any other cause. In one incident, a runner was

jogging on a leaf-strewn path in his subdivision and stepped into a hole and broke his ankle. Runners need to beware of concealed surfaces even in familiar surroundings. They must be aware of their surroundings at all times and look ahead, scanning for potential problems.

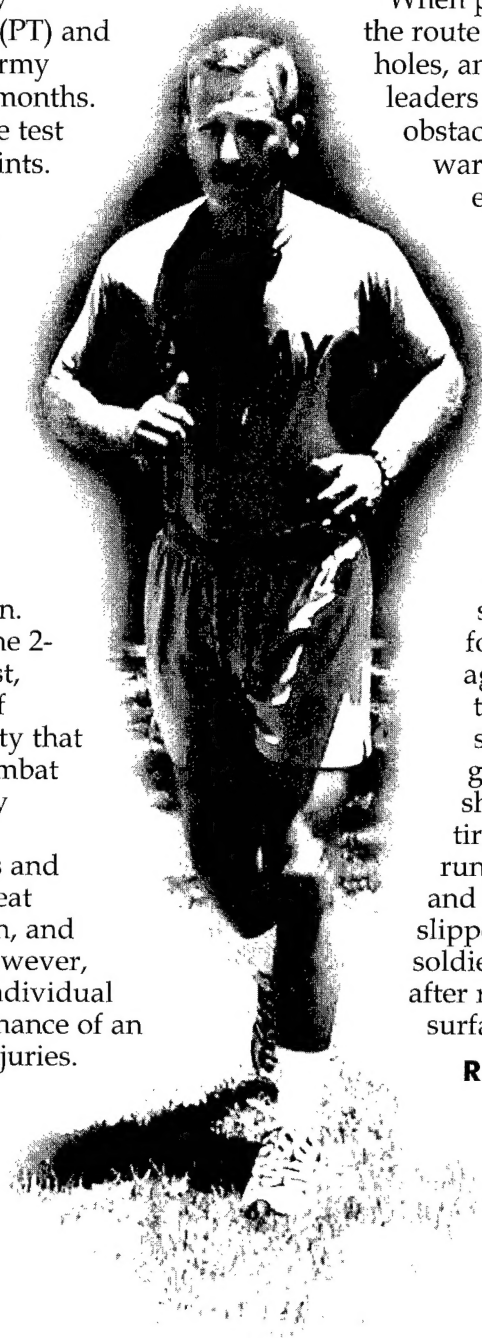
When planning a run, leaders should walk the route to identify irregular surfaces, holes, and other hazards. Before the run, leaders should brief the lead runners on obstacles and instruct them to call out a warning to the other runners, especially if the run will take place after dark.

Slips and falls are usually caused by one primary factor—running too fast for conditions. One soldier was running on a wet, grassy field and slipped as he rounded a turn and broke his ankle.

Whether running in formation or alone, runners must watch for and avoid wet grass, ice, slopes, and other areas not suitable for running. The best precaution against slips and falls is for runners to slow down and shorten their strides on wet surfaces and wear good shoes. Running in worn-out shoes is like driving a car on bald tires. Also like tires, the soles of running shoes can clog up with mud and grass, making them heavy and slippery. Leaders should remind soldiers to check their soles before and after running on wet grass or muddy surfaces; it may save their legs.

## **Running in the heat**

Running in hot weather is dangerous for everyone, especially those not acclimatized. In one such incident, a soldier participated in a 5-mile run 2 days after PCSing into his



unit. The pace was the 8-minute mile. The soldier collapsed after finishing the run and had to be hospitalized.

Leaders should identify newly assigned soldiers and provide separate training until the soldiers are acclimated. Per FM 21-20, an 8 to 14-day acclimatization period should be the standard before newly assigned soldiers are allowed to participate in runs exceeding 3 miles. Increased fluid intake, as well as adequate rest and abstaining from alcohol the night before a long run, will help prevent heat injuries.

### **Staying fit while keeping fit**

Unit runs provide leaders a prime opportunity to educate soldiers on staying healthy and injury free during their personal training programs. Leaders must allow time for stretching and emphasize its importance both before and after running. All runs should begin at a slow pace for the first mile, then increase speed. During PT tests, the 10 minutes between events should be used to stretch and prepare; soldiers shouldn't be allowed to just stand or sit around. And after sit-ups, runners should walk or run a quarter to a half-mile. Loose legs and warm muscles will help eliminate pulled hamstrings, popped knees, and stiff hips during the run. Soldiers reporting to Ranger, Airborne, and other schools requiring daily physical training should start preparing weeks in advance of the school start date.

### **Choosing the right shoes**

Wearing the wrong shoes causes many running injuries. Since not all feet are alike, manufacturers design their shoes to lessen the effects of differences in movement. Promotional literature is available at most sporting goods and runners' supply stores, and knowledgeable salespeople who are runners themselves can be a big help in choosing the right shoe.

Finally, running shoes are just that—*running* shoes. They're not made with enough lateral support to prevent twisted ankles during basketball, racquetball, or handball games or with enough durability to stand up to an obstacle course, grass drill, or other strenuous activity. Cross-training shoes or combat boots are better suited to activities where running is not the major concern. Master fitness trainers and other leaders can help soldiers choose the proper footwear by specifying on the training schedule the type of training to be conducted.

Leaders who follow these guidelines and educate their soldiers to train safely will increase their soldiers' performance and decrease their trips to sick call, which will result in increased unit fitness. ◀

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## **Road Rules For Runners**

- Adjust speed and route to avoid contact with traffic, cyclists, and pedestrians.
- Do not try to outrun dogs; rather, slow to a walk and stop.
- Do not run on heavily traveled roads. Not only are you subject to being struck by a vehicle, you may also cause motorists to swerve or take actions that cause them to have an accident.
- When running alone, always face traffic. It's easier to monitor oncoming traffic and avoid being struck by turning vehicles.
- During formation runs, run with the traffic. Road guards should scout for uneven ground, holes, and other obstacles. Lead runners should announce obstacles, warning runners to avoid them. In particularly rough areas, slow to a walk, then resume run when clear.
- If you must run at night, wear light-colored clothing and a reflective vest, and carry a small flashlight.
- When running alone, do not run in areas where you might not be found by a passing runner or motorist if you are injured. If you run in such areas, run with a buddy.
- Ensure that someone knows your planned route and estimated return time.
- Don't wear headsets.
- Dress appropriately to avoid heat stress or hypothermia in extreme temperatures.
- Schedule PT activities in the early morning or late evening.
- Wear gloves and caps, as needed, in cold weather.
- Postpone running if thunderstorms or other severe weather conditions are anticipated.
- Other key elements for risk reduction include: proper rest, hydration, and balanced diet. ♦

Written by accident investigators to provide major lessons learned from recent centralized accident investigations.

# Investigators' Forum

## Soldier Dies From Fall

**T**he basic training company was conducting a confidence obstacle course early in their training cycle. This obstacle course was set up as defined in Chapter 8 of FM 21-20, *Physical Fitness Training*. It consisted of climbing, jumping, and strength events designed to challenge the soldiers to accomplish difficult tasks individually and as part of a group.

The company began the training day by marching to the obstacle course site. After arriving, the drill sergeants broke the unit into platoons and conducted stretching and warm-up exercises. They also conducted a demonstration of each obstacle so that the soldiers would know how to accomplish each task.

Each platoon was then taken to the start point of each obstacle group, identified by color. One platoon would start at the red group, move to the blue

group, and then end with the white group.

One of the white group obstacles was the inverted rope descent. This particular obstacle included a tower made up of three large poles tied together at the top to form a pyramid-shaped tripod about 35 feet high. Two 2.5-inch diameter ropes were tied near the top of the pyramid on one end and the other end was anchored to smaller poles away from the tower. Soldiers were required to climb the tower using eight horizontal beams and then grasp one of the two ropes. After grabbing the rope below the knot, the soldier would then swing his legs forward, hook them over the rope with his feet facing away from the tower. The soldier then descends the rope using a hand-under-hand motion until reaching a designated dismount point near the ground.

The first half of the platoon negotiated the obstacle without any problem. The drill sergeant was standing near the base of the tower encouraging the soldiers to accomplish the task. One soldier, however, had problems and was hesitant to climb the tower. His fellow trainees cheered him on, and the

### Mission: Confidence Obstacle Course

#### Hazard

- Improperly constructed obstacle

#### Result

- 1 fatality

#### Controls

- Safety nets and mats
- Instructor on a platform on top of tower
- Use proper rope size (1.5 inch diameter)
- Properly tie ropes to top of tower





drill sergeant climbed partway to talk to him personally and convince him to continue. After a few moments, the soldier continued up the tower. He reached the top and began to mount the rope.

He initially grabbed the rope above the large knot. The other platoon members told him to grab it below the knot, so he leaned out to do so. He then swung his legs out to hook them over the rope; however, he was unable to get his legs over the top of the rope, leaving him hanging from the rope only by his hands. After a few seconds, he slid a few feet down the rope. He nervously looked down and then fell from the rope. He consequently struck one of the support beams on the way down with his leg and landed on his abdomen on the lower beam. He was taken to the local hospital and later died from his injuries.

### **What went wrong?**

The inverted rope descent obstacle on this course was not safely constructed. The board discovered that there are conflicting standards for the design and construction of this tower. FM 21-20 directs that the actual obstacles be built to the standards of Corps of Engineers drawing number 28-13-95 from Folio 1, "Training Facilities." This drawing shows the tower and requires two 1.5-inch ropes. The drawing does not show any safety nets or platforms on the tower. FM 21-20, however, shows a platform on its sketch of the tower, and it states that an instructor must be on the platform. It also says that safety nets are required for these high obstacles. This particular tower had no platform and no net. The unit had emplaced mats around the tower, but there was no protection on the support beams.

Inspections by the local safety office noted the improper rope size, but did not require anyone to replace them prior to their wearing out from normal use. A higher headquarters inspection stated that this particular obstacle should not be used until a safety net was emplaced. This guidance was also not followed.

With no platform near the top of the tower, there was no place for an instructor to monitor the soldiers' progress as required by FM 21-20. Both the unit's SOP and the Program of

Instruction (POI) for the conduct of the obstacle course require two instructors for this event, but only one was present, and he was on the ground.

### **Lessons learned**

The obstacle was improperly constructed due to conflicting standards. The unit did not reference the engineer drawing in FM 21-20, so they did not notice that the obstacle did not match the sketch and narrative description. Their risk management process failed in that no one identified the lack of a platform and a net, in contravention to the requirements in FM 21-20.

Units at all levels failed to take action based on inspection results. The local safety office noted that the ropes were not the right size and higher headquarters noted that there was no net; therefore, this obstacle was not safe to use. No one took action to correct these deficiencies, and the inspecting agencies took no action to ensure that their reports were followed up.

Drill sergeants in this unit were not confident in their ability to report unsafe activities to higher authorities and to stop perceived unsafe acts. Several said that they talked among themselves about how unsafe this event seemed to them, but due to peer pressure to not look "weak," they took no action.

### **Summary**

This accident was caused by the failure of unit leaders to correct known deficiencies and to properly manage the risks associated with the event. Leaders at brigade and installation levels knew that this obstacle had problems, but no one corrected them, nor did they restrict the obstacle from use. Leaders at the company level did not ensure that this training was conducted in accordance with the FM and their own SOP and POI. Leaders onsite did not take action to stop the event after they noted that it was not safe. As a result, a trainee found himself in a position he could not recover from, and he fell to his death. Leaders at all levels are responsible for safely training their soldiers. Don't just observe — LEAD! ♦

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# Good Decisions

**I**magine this... It's early morning, approximately 0200, at the National Training Center (NTC), Fort Irwin, CA. My driver and I are posting guards in our sector of responsibility. We're traveling under blackout drive conditions and we cannot see anything even with our night vision goggles (NVGs) because there is no illumination. My driver is a first-rate Specialist and an excellent driver who will do most anything to complete the mission. On this night, he has his head out the window claiming he can see the road. In addition, there are two guards in back who are totally unaware of the danger they're in.

I was somewhat aware of our situation as we drove uphill toward the first guard point. There was a large wadi on both sides of the narrow, rocky road. I tried frantically to identify where we were in relation to those waddies with no success. My heart was racing, and I'm thinking more and more that

something bad is about to happen. I realize a decision has to be made, and quickly.

So, what should I do? Do I order the vehicle to stop and run the risk of being late posting the guards or do I allow the mission to continue and just take my chances?

What would you do? Would you remind yourself that there are lives at stake and those lives depend on the decision that you are about to make? Would you take in consideration that family members are depending on you to get their husbands, wives, sons and daughters home safely from training? Training? Hmmmmmm...

It's shocking to note the number of times leaders find themselves in potentially dangerous situations during training. Not war, training. Oftentimes, leaders make the wrong decision that doesn't immediately result in an accident or injury, but may result in what is called a near miss.

Now, some would call a near miss "a lucky break." But is it really luck? There is a relationship between near misses and catastrophic injury.

Statistics indicate that for every serious incident, there are 59 minor incidents and 600 near misses.



What this says to me is that the elements necessary to produce serious injury are present more than we think.

### **So how can NCOs influence other NCOs?**

Just for a moment, let's compare the elements that must be present to have an accident with elements necessary to have a thunderstorm or a fire. There are certain elements that must come together to produce that thunderstorm—a cold front and a warm front. When these come together, severe weather is probable.

We can use the same analogy for a fire. In order to have a fire, there are certain elements that must be present—fuel, heat, and oxygen. So removal of any one element makes it highly unlikely that the said result can happen, either for the thunderstorm or the fire.

Now, let's apply this principle to accident prevention. What elements must be present to increase the probability of an accident? Man, machine, and environment. Obviously, these three have a need to be together, so we won't even entertain removing one.

So what can we remove? The answer is complacency, inattention, carelessness, the sense of invincibility, and a bad decision-making process. Removal of

these unwanted areas would significantly reduce the probability and the severity of an accident. Hazards and risks will never completely be eliminated, but they can be reduced.

So, how is this done? The answer is training, training, and more training. Our soldiers need training on risk management in order to more effectively identify and control hazards. We have all heard the phrase, "Train to standard." If we can ensure our soldiers are *effectively* trained on each and every piece of equipment and procedure, that will make the difference between failure and success. You see, the standards are there—we just have to enforce them.

So what decision did I make back there in the desert? Was there any doubt? I ordered the driver to stop; I got out of the vehicle and looked around. I identified the hazard, assessed the situation, made a decision based on awareness, and continued with the mission.

We had a successful mission that night, but what made it successful was that it was accomplished without accident or injury. ♦

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## **Accident Briefs**

### **Combat Soldiering**

■ A SSG was negotiating an obstacle course when he struck his rib cage on a horizontal pipe while jumping to a second level in one of the obstacle course stations. The soldier suffered a fractured rib and bruised chest. Because of his injuries, he was dropped from the Special Forces qualification course and sidelined from his unit for 16 days.

### **Physical Training**

■ A 1SG was running in a battalion run when he collapsed. Medical personnel determined that he had suffered a heat stroke. The soldier had been taking an antihistamine for a sinus infection, resulting

in dehydration. The 1SG was hospitalized for 3 days and diagnosed with internal damage to his kidneys, liver, and muscle tissue.

■ A CPT was participating in a confidence course as part of the day's physical training. As he was descending the rappelling tower, he jumped out from the wall to facilitate a smooth descent. Upon swinging back into the wall, he landed with his right leg at an awkward angle. The impact and angle of the movement caused the soldier to suffer a muscle injury in his right leg. Consequently, due to this injury, the CPT was dropped from the qualification course and was unable to join his unit for nine days. ♦

# Preventing POV Deaths

**T**he most deadly threat soldiers face in peacetime is traffic accidents. Privately owned vehicle (POV) accidents kill more soldiers than all other Army accidents combined. Army accident records reveal the grim truth: soldiers continue to ignore speed limits, shrug off the 'zzz-monster' of fatigue, travel too fast for weather and road conditions, leave seatbelts unbuckled, and yes—continue to mix alcohol with car keys.

General Eric K. Shinseki, Chief of Staff, Army, (CSA) has made clear his determination to end these tragic and needless POV fatalities and the adverse impact it has on readiness.

General Shinseki has directed that commanders and leaders use the following Army Six-Point Model POV Accident Prevention Program in every unit as a minimum standard to reduce the risk of POV accidents.

**1. Command Emphasis.** Emphasize positive leadership at all levels. Junior officers and noncommissioned officers should get to know their soldiers. Assert positive, hands-on leadership on how, when, and where soldiers operate their POVs.

**2. Discipline.**  
Negative behavior  
such as traffic  
offenses, alcohol

abuse, misconduct, and poor performance often are indicators of potential POV accident victims. Leader intervention by identifying "at risk" soldiers, counseling them, and taking proactive measures to modify their risky behavior has been effective in units successfully combating POV accidents.

**3. Risk Management.** Use the *POV Risk Management Toolbox* to inculcate proactive risk control measures and provide 'tried and true' training and guidance tips to leaders and safety personnel. The Toolbox is available at <http://safety.army.mil/pages/pov/index.html>. Make it available to leaders at all levels.

**4. Standards.** Leaders should set high standards for the safe operation of POVs and motorcycles, and enforce them. Educate soldiers on the risks of speed, fatigue, and use of alcohol. Leaders can conduct mandatory POV safety inspections, random roadside checks, and emphasize the use of designated drivers.

**5. Provide Alternatives.** Leaders can provide soldiers alternatives rather than driving POVs: schedule activities on post to keep soldiers off the road; keep gyms, recreation centers, and other places that soldiers use off-duty open later; encourage use of public transportation; use morale, welfare, and recreation services to provide buses or vans to transport soldiers to the places they go when off-duty; explore arranging reduced hotel rates in nearby communities to encourage soldiers to remain overnight on weekends and stay off the highways late at night.

**6. Commander's Assessment.** Assess every POV fatality and serious injury accident with the involved soldier's chain of command to determine why the accident occurred and how it could have been prevented. Implement corrective and preventive measures. Publicize lessons learned.

The key to having a successful POV accident prevention program and stopping this tragic loss of life is proactive leader involvement, particularly at the squad leader or first-line supervisor level. ♦

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## POV Accident Prevention



**ON and OFF  
DUTY**

**Driver Training**

**Discipline**

**Leadership**



# Aggressive Driving

## Are You Part of the Problem?

**Y**ou have seen it a thousand times. You're driving the speed limit in the slow lane, when someone comes up right behind you and hugs your rear bumper? What do you do?

A recent American Automobile Association (AAA)/Gallup poll shows we fear aggressive drivers more than drunken drivers. The aggressive driver is typified by behavior such as cutting people off, tailgating, speeding, and careless weaving in and out of lanes. All common descriptions of what we see in our daily commute to work. Unfortunately, these actions put the rest of us at risk.

Driving is complex and no one is perfect. Law enforcement agencies do their part to control our crowded roads, but there may not be any easy solutions to the cultural driving patterns, which are increasingly leaning towards aggressive driving. Statistics show more and more that aggressive driving causes accidents.

How can we avoid being victims of aggressive drivers? The AAA Foundation provides three guiding principles:

- Don't offend. Be courteous to other drivers

by using turn signals and not cutting off the other driver. If you are driving slower than other traffic, use the right lane. Avoid making gestures that may anger other drivers. Avoid the urge to tailgate other vehicles.

■ **Don't engage.**

Stay clear of angry drivers. Control the urge to retaliate from what may appear to you to be the other driver's lack of courtesy. Avoid eye contact, which may encourage the aggressive driver.

■ **Adjust your attitude.** Avoid viewing the driving activity as a contest that requires you to win. Allowing more time can remove the sense of urgency. Listen to soothing music and practice relaxation techniques.

Violent and aggressive driving is increasingly on the rise. You can avoid becoming a victim by using these tips. You can also play a major role in making our roadways safer by

reporting aggressive driving incidents to the appropriate law enforcement authorities. ♦

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# Outta' My Way!



## Don't Be An **AGGRESSIVE DRIVER!**



*Editor's Note: Road rage differs from aggressive driving in that road rage involves a violent traffic dispute (physical assault or vehicle contact). Aggressive drivers operate their vehicle in a bold or pushy manner often violating traffic codes like speeding, following too close, and making improper lane changes.*

# Dying To Get Home

***This story describes a tragic accident. The driver risked not only his own life, but the lives of his family...***

**T**he Sailor had just bought the used sport utility vehicle (SUV) in June. Even though his driver's license had been suspended for the past two years for multiple traffic offenses, he still planned to drive his family from Norfolk, VA, to their hometown in Alabama to visit relatives.

His leave started on 7 July. The next day, he took his SUV to the dealership to have it checked by mechanics. They made minor adjustments. The car wasn't ready until 1730 on 9 July. With two days of his leave eaten up, the Sailor was in a hurry to leave.

As soon as he brought the car home, he and his family left for the trip. His family included his wife, 7-year-old twins, a 5-year-old son, and

his mother-in-law.

The next morning at 0630, passersby in Alabama found the SUV on the side of the road in flames. The Sailor was dead. So were two of his children and his mother-in-law, who were riding in the rear seat. These four weren't wearing seatbelts. His wife, sitting in the front passenger seat, was wearing a seatbelt. She was holding the 5-year-old, within the same belt, in her lap. The passersby cut the mother and son out of the wreck. They were taken to a hospital. The mother had multiple broken bones, internal injuries, and second-degree burns. Even though she is now disabled, she survived. The 5-year-old died from internal injuries.

The Sailor was found in the driver's seat with his shoes off and tucked under his seat, which was reclined. Does this indicate he was tired? We don't know, but investigators believe he fell asleep while driving. The car crossed a grass median where it hit a tree stump; then, it crossed an oncoming traffic lane, slammed into a tree on the shoulder of the road, and burst into flames.

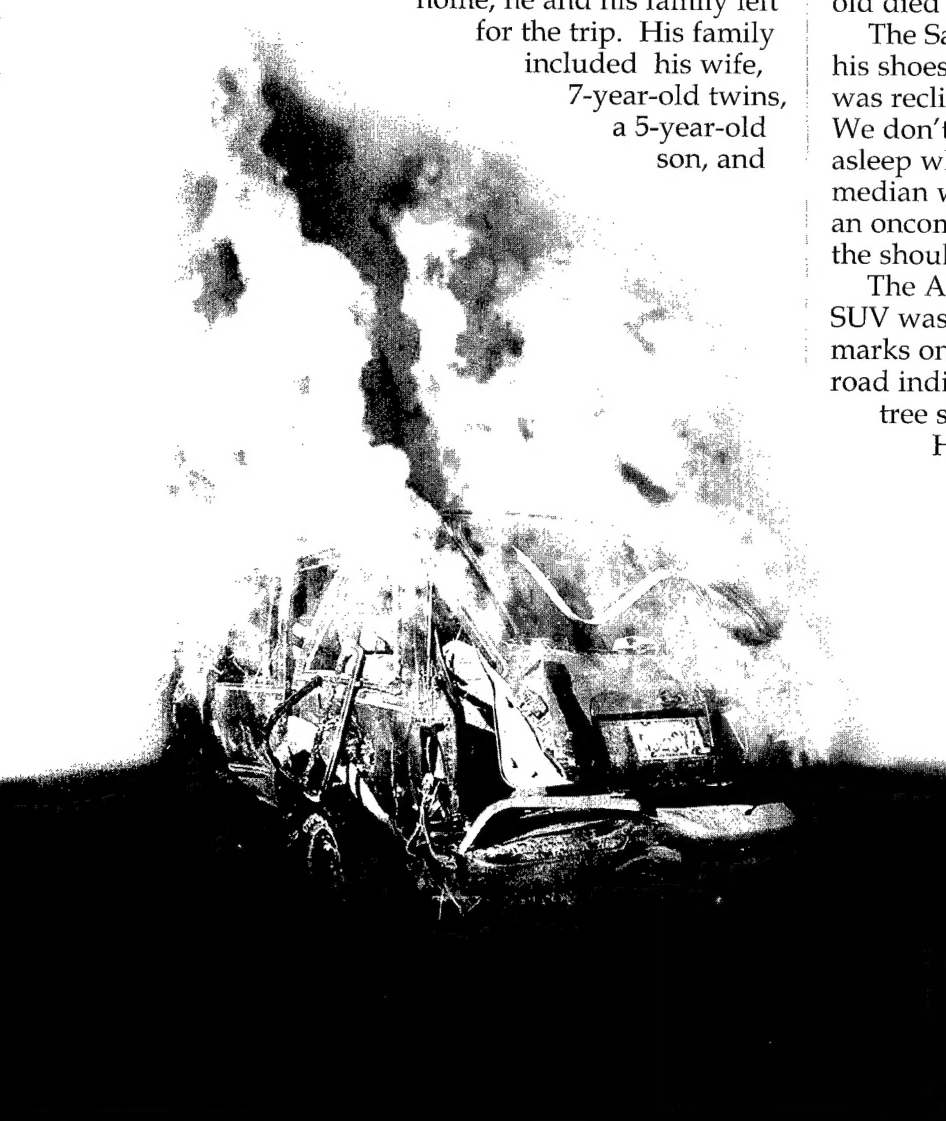
The Alabama police estimate the speed of the SUV was 70 mph when it hit the tree. Tire marks on the median and skid marks on the road indicate the Sailor woke up when he hit the tree stump and jammed on the brakes.

However, there wasn't enough distance between that point and the tree to stop the car.

This trip didn't have to end in tragedy...and wouldn't have if the people involved had looked at the hazards and assessed each hazard in terms of probability, weighed the possibilities of tragedy, and considered the consequences.

If the driver had 20/20 hindsight, here's how he could have done his own risk management exercise before the trip:

"I've already burned up two days of my leave waiting for this car to be looked at. Now, it's finally ready. It's already 1730 and I've been up all day, but I'm really anxious to get on the road. Let's see, I've got myself, the wife, the kids, and my mother-in-law...that's six people in a car that



has only five seatbelts. I sure wish my license hadn't been suspended because of all the traffic violations I've had."

If he had carefully assessed the hazards, the driver could have taken action to ensure his family's safety. He never would have driven the car in the first place. He had two other adults with valid driver's licenses who could have taken turns. Also, since his vehicle wasn't equipped to carry all those people, he could have left someone behind, gotten a larger vehicle, or bought a bus ticket. Even if he was going to drive, he could have gotten a good night's sleep and started out the next morning.

Not all the responsibility is on the driver to look at hazards and risks. There were two other adults in the car.

They could have insisted that they not start the trip until the next morning. The mother-in-law could have volunteered to stay behind to give everyone a chance to be buckled up. The mother could have insisted that all her children be safely secured. Also, both adults knew the husband had a suspended license. They had the responsibility to not let him drive and refuse to ride with him.

Think about this family the next time you go on leave. The possibility of tragedy exists every time you drive a car, either on a vacation or just around town. Look at the risks you may be taking and do your best to lessen them. ♦

**This article was written by Virginia Rae Mack, Editor, Ashore Magazine, the Naval Safety Center's official shore safety publication.**

## Quickbits

### New E-mail Address

**T**he Safety Center is changing its e-mail address to [safetycenter.army.mil](mailto:safetycenter.army.mil). An example of our new e-mail address is: **user-id@safetycenter.army.mil**. All users will also be able to receive mail to the old address ([safety-emh1.army.mil](mailto:safety-emh1.army.mil)) until 1 Oct 00. ♦

### Oops, We Goofed!

**O**ne of the painful parts of my job is seeing an error get printed. It's like the old saying goes, "Doctors can bury their mistakes," but we print ours in 35,000 copies! In the May 2000 *Countermeasure* article, "Too Fast for Conditions," we incorrectly described an M915A2 as having a cross-country 5th wheel. It is the M916A2 that has a cross-country 5th wheel. Thanks, Dan Korbel, for bringing this to our attention. ♦

### Update!

**C**hange 1 to AR 385-10, *The Army Safety Program*, dated 29 February 2000, is now available in electronic format. The updated regulation provides risk management policy and definitions, and provides authorization for collateral duty safety personnel to perform standard Army safety and occupational health inspections (SASOHI). Other pertinent changes include revising all Army safety organizational structures (para 2-1); integrating water safety (para 2-2n), thereby rescinding AR 385-15, *Water Safety*; and adding an Appendix B, Management Control Evaluation Checklist, to help commanders evaluate key management controls.

This change replaces the 23 May 1988 edition and is available only in electronic format through the Army Publishing Agency web site. You can also download a copy by going to our web site <http://safety.army.mil/>, and then go to **Guidance/Safety/Army/AR 385-10**.

**Editor's note:** Please discard any copies of change 1 to AR 385-10 downloaded prior to 17 May 2000. For more info, contact Mr. Truman Taylor, USASC Policy, Plans, and Programs Branch, DSN 558-2609 (334-255-2609), [taylorl@safetycenter.army.mil](mailto:taylorl@safetycenter.army.mil) ♦



**Life,**

**Liberty,**

and the pursuit  
of happiness . . .

**CELEBRATE  
SAFELY!**